

# VISIONS MADE FACT BY WAR CAMP COMMUNITY SERVICE



WAR CAMP COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB at PORTLAND, MAINE.



W.C.C. GIVES COUNSEL ON HOW TO SEE THE CITY WHEN ON LEAVE

## Evils Arising From the Mobilization of Millions of Men Promptly Met and Eradicated by Bringing Home Influences to Camps

IN the summer of 1916 Secretary Baker sent Raymond B. Fosdick as a special agent of the War Department to investigate conditions in communities on the Mexican border where our troops were stationed. Mr. Fosdick found five thousand soldiers camped at Columbus, N. M., with "absolutely nothing in the town that could in any way amuse them. There were no moving picture shows; no places where they could write letters; no library facilities of any kind; no home to which they could go—nothing absolutely at all except a very well run red light district and a few saloons."

This investigation officially convinced the Government that there were war camp community problems. When the United States launched her war programme against Germany War Camp Community Service became the official answer to that problem.

The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities was appointed by Secretary Newton D. Baker in April, 1917. The Navy Department Commission on Training Camp Activities was established by Secretary Josephus Daniels three months later. Raymond B. Fosdick became chairman of both.

By the end of May, 1917, War Camp Community Service was a vital organization. Military and naval police permits enlisted men to leave camp now and then in order that they may ease the strain and relax from the rigors of military routine and discipline. It recognizes the desirability of permitting friends and relatives to visit these men when adequate facilities are available for their accommodation in near camp communities.

On leave the fighter seeks contact with the human side of life. He goes to town. Whether his visits are an asset or a liability in his training depends largely on what he does while there. And what he does is limited by what there is to do.

### Need of Organized Effort.

The Government's hurried establishment of army camps and naval training stations over the country threw many American communities into turmoil. Some towns saw their transient populations increase as much as 1,000 per cent. over night. Frequently they lacked the power of controlling undesirable conditions and the means to provide enough desirable ones.

Low grade entertainment and open vice lost no time gaining a foothold where communities were unorganized and inattentive. Many towns had no public rest rooms or information bureau, comfort stations or drinking fountains. The street corner provided the only place where a lone soldier could meet a companion. Some localities faced critical problems of sanitation, of transportation and of feeding and housing their greatly increased floating populations. And funds were not sufficient to remedy these conditions.

War Camp Community Service went to the assistance of these towns. This organization is now operating in some 600 communities adjacent to training camps and stations, helping them to extend hospitality to a transient population of soldiers, sailors, marines and visiting civilians the total of which would run well into the millions.

War Camp Community Service attacks the problem of serving the soldier and sailor and their guests from five angles. It gives to the aim of service, the widest possible interpretation. First it extends community service in the strict sense of the word. Further it fosters community hospitality and community recreation. Its administrative tool is community or-



keep'em smiling!

help War Camp Community Service



"morale is winning the war"

UNITED WAR WORK CAMPAIGN

ganization, and its certain by-product community betterment.

It is doubtful whether Any-Camp-Town will ever revert to its small town ways of answering the thousand and one questions of the travelling public. Not even if the camp were moved or abolished, and there is no immediate likelihood of this.

### Information Bureau for All.

Mr. Average Citizen, thanks to the War Camp Community Service of Any-Camp-Town, can now refer him to some one who knows. There are stationed in the railway stations, in churches and schools, in the corridors of public buildings, and in booths along the sidewalks of Any-Camp-Town information secretaries, whose duties are to make themselves useful to any one, soldier, sailor, marine or civilian, who presents himself or herself at the desk. From early morning until late night they dispense consult, inform and advice; consult, inform and advise; consult, inform and advise.

If War Camp Community Service did nothing else but act as an information bureau for soldiers and sailors and their civilian friends it would be performing a worth while task. But this is only where its work begins.

War Camp Community Service has issued a million or more booklets describing the worth while places near America's military and naval training stations. These bulletins are designed to tell where Any-Camp-Town is, and to outline its claims to fame. They list the clubs for enlisted men, throw in a few words about local entertainments and dances, catalogue the churches and the hotels and contain a paragraph or two about lodging facilities. In short, they tell the enlisted man just what he wants to know about Any-Camp-Town, and tell him right away.

War Camp Community Service has opened hotels and lodging houses in many American communities. In some instances hotels already in op-

eration have been taken over, modernized and opened under the management of this organization. In other instances hotel managements have cut their rates for the men in the service.

For example, a large hostelry in a California coast town provides a room and bath to men in uniform for 50 cents a night. It serves them food in the grill at cost, and welcomes them to its swimming pool at 12 cents a plunge. Social functions are held at the hotel for enlisted men under the supervision of the local War Camp Community Service. For these the hotel provides the music gratis.

### Hotels for Enlisted Men.

The New York War Camp Community Service operates hotels exclusively for enlisted men. One provides 800 beds with bath at 25 cents a night. Its reception room and reading, writing, billiard and pool rooms are up to the utmost. One point of particular interest about this hotel is that much of the furniture in its main corridors was confiscated by the Government from German ocean liners interned in the New York harbor at the outbreak of the war.

Where the need has created the demand War Camp Community Service has opened dormitories and cafeterias in connection with its clubs for soldiers and sailors. Here comfortable beds with bath are provided to enlisted men at prices ranging from 25 to 50 cents a night.

The club cafeterias serve good food to enlisted men at under the market prices. Consider, for example, the chocolate covered soup dish full of home made ice cream served at 7 cents a helping to men in uniform in the cafeteria of the Kansas City War Camp Community Service Club. It is a veritable Vesuvius of delight as compared with the win the war for fifteen cents size how traditional among civilian confectioners!

In towns whose hotel and lodging house accommodations are overtaxed

War Camp Community Service manages agencies for placing transients in spare rooms. When an enlisted man desires accommodations for his visiting friends and relatives he finds the doors of War Camp Community Service an entrance into the best homes in the community.

"What's the charge for this service?" is the frequent inquiry.

"No charge at all," is the invariable response.

When the enlisted man and his civilian friends went first to camp transportation in some of the adjoining towns was offered in anything on wheels and at whatever figure the elasticity of the driver's conscience and the willingness of the rider's purse permitted. The street hawking rivalled that at Coney Island on a lucrative Saturday night. Puncty traffic was the result.

### Cure for Desertions.

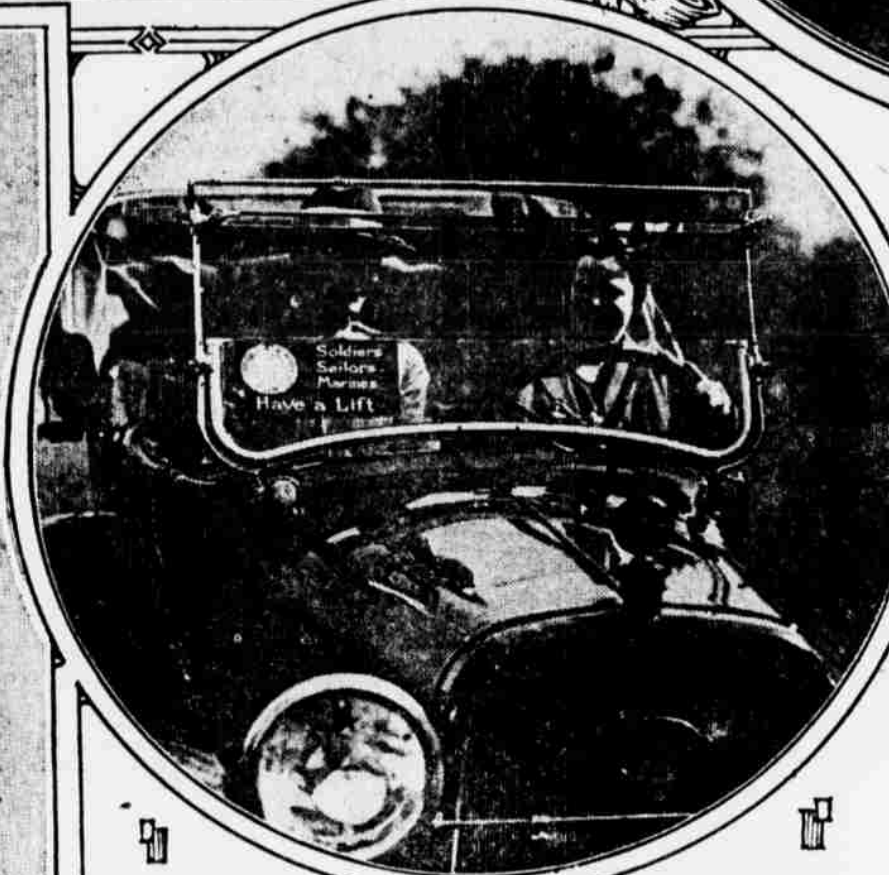
By securing the cooperation of the military police and of the local city officials War Camp Community Service changed this condition over night. A middle Western camp town decided to limit its issue of taxicab licenses to seven passenger cars. It set the cab fare at 25 cents from town to camp and established a 10 cent bus line. The loading and starting of cars was placed in entire charge of the military police. A Colonel in command of 1,600 deserters at Fort Leavenworth decided recently to learn the reasons his prisoners would give for foolhardily risking their military reputations for the sake of a few hours leave. He commissioned five men to conduct the inquiry.

"Are you ready to make your report on the cause for desertions?" the Colonel asked the spokesman on his return.

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"Your first reason?" questioned the Colonel.

"We find, sir, that the main reason for desertion in the army is homesickness."



WHEN A SOLDIER OR SAILOR COMES TO TOWN ON LEAVE, the W.C.C.S. AUTOMOBILE SAVES HIS SHOE LEATHER.

"Your other reasons?" anticipated the officer.

"The other reasons are unimportant, sir."

"Do you mean to say that the reason the men desert from the army is because they get homesick?"

"Yes, sir," replied the spokesman; "it is the longing for home and for home comforts and companionships that causes desertion."

To make any camp "just like home" to soldiers, sailors and marines is the job of War Camp Community Service.

The most obvious way to make the enlisted man feel at home in the camp community is to invite him into the homes of its citizens. This War Camp Community Service does. And the doors of America's homes are swinging wide. Throughout the country new extensions to dinner tables, extra places and extra portions are preparing the way for guests in khaki and blue.

### Visions Made Fact.

It takes a visionary to see a modern club, equipped with game rooms, writing rooms, a combination dance floor and auditorium, a barber shop and cafeteria standing where a dilapidated old saloon building, to see a spacious lounge room substituted for a greasy stained dining room and an immaculate billiard parlor for a beer soaked barroom.

But these are the days for visionaries! The war with its exigencies has replaced the old saloon with the dictionary of obsolete terms. The representative of any camp town War Camp Community Service has put the solid foundation of fact under this dream!

From coast to coast War Camp Community Service has streched a chain of clubs for soldiers, sailors and marines. Dark staircases which for decades have creaked out the bi-monthly meetings of community lodges have given way to light and airy corridors leading to inviting entertainment rooms. Curtained windows, replacing paneled space with rain spattered glass, have transformed lofts, store buildings, unused residences, hotels and churches into hospitable quarters for enlisted men.

Twenty-eight clubs are affiliated with the New York city organization. They are open every day until midnight. They provide not only reading, writing, game and loafing rooms, but dormitories, canteens and facilities for their guests to clean and press their uniforms. One club features Sunday night community sing; and another Tuesday afternoon French classes. Thousands of fighters enjoy their hospitality.

Many men had never had the advantages of membership in a club before going to the war camp communities. That their uniform is their pass was not at first readily understood. There were frequent inquiries regarding membership dues.

"Ain't they gonna charge us nothing?" was followed more than once with a surprised "Well, what d'you know about that?"

War Camp Community Service is at its best perhaps in the near camp community house. So unusual is this institution that it is difficult to keep it from a conspicuous place in the foreground of any picture of this organization's activities. And no such attempt has been made in this country.

War Camp Community Service has helped to build six community houses. It is proud of them. It cherishes plans for building more. It hopes to see them stand as lasting monuments to America's war born spirit of corps of neighborliness, which is this organization's existence.

When the Government revealed its plan to establish military and naval training stations throughout the country there was a hurried influx into many camp towns of cheap and vulgar amusements. The problem of providing recreation to twenty thousand or more transient visitors was larger than most towns were able to solve alone. They had neither the powers to control undesirable attractions nor facilities to provide adequate entertainment.

When War Camp Community Service went into the camp towns understrable attractions left. For them were substituted athletics of all sorts, diversified entertainments, pageants, festivals, parties, dances, automobile rides, sight seeing excursions, picnics, concerts and wholesome commercial amusements at reduced prices.

America's outdoor sports require an

## Mothers, Wives and Whole Communities as Well as the Soldiers Benefited by the Work

abundance of space and air. Given these, the average American reared man can amuse himself at baseball, tennis and their kindred outlets for energy.

Through War Camp Community Service American towns were quick to place their recreational facilities at the disposal of the soldier, the sailor and the marine. Playgrounds, swimming pools, bath houses, athletic fields, stadiums, gymnasiums, amusement parks, skating rinks, dancing pavilions and auditoriums throughout the country are now open to these men.

Atlanta's Mayor has placed ten baseball diamonds at the service of men in military and naval service. Enlisted men are daily guests in San Diego's world renowned recreation building. This city operates a three game a week baseball league, stages wrestling and boxing matches and conducts track and field meets. Seattle's entertainment programme features water and ice carnivals.

Six hundred engineers stationed at Deming, N. M., transformed an unused reservoir, covering fifteen acres, into an amphitheatre. It seats 20,000 soldiers. It provides baseball and football fields, volleyball, tennis and basketball courts and an open air swimming pool for Camp Cody's enlisted men.

Soldiers Kept Singing. In the opinion of Major-General Wood: "It is just as essential that soldiers know how to sing as it is that they know how to march. Singing is a good thing. It is a good thing to use them." Holsteraud, when opportune and stilled when inopportune, song offers an invaluable outlet to the moods and emotions of men on battlefields. Fighters must sing!

War Camp Community Service keeps the singing outside the camp. It conducts community sings and festivals for mixed audiences of enlisted men and civilians. Such an occasion given at Norfolk, Va., was attended by some 4,000 people. One sing in Des Moines was accompanied by three military bands, and combined the voices of 12,000 civilians and enlisted men, white and colored.

Every Saturday night the camps go dancing. Perhaps more than any other form of recreation offered by communities, dances have been the fighters' key to the social life of the camp towns. War Camp Community Service provides the time, the place and the girl. Usually the time is Friday or Saturday night, the place is in the city's opera house, lodge room, church social room, community house or

neighborhood club, and the girl the very flower of Any Camp Town.

This last feature has become so universally apparent that a recent editorial in The Evening Star advocated the organization of the S. P. M. U. M. A. P. G. S. N.—Society to Prevent Men in Uniform from Monopolizing All the Pretty Girls on Saturday Nights.

The men who attend these functions are sponsored. They are admitted by cards of introduction from a townsmen or from a designated officer at the camp. That is the way it would be done back home. And the way it would be done at home is the War Camp Community Service way.

During one week, and it was a small week at that, War Camp Community Service issued 1210 dance and entertainment invitations to enlisted men visiting New York. During the same week 778 theatre, skating and sight-seeing tickets were distributed.

"When we took a chance on the War Camp Community Service, we met the people in charge things happened," says a private. "We were welcomed, and nobody appreciates a welcome more than a soldier, but that wasn't all."

### Made to Feel at Home.

"We were introduced to the best people in Any Camp Town. First thing we knew we were out on a real automobile ride in a real car, with real folks. We were treated like a pair of officers! That led to supper with a family whose son is in the service and a long series of tennis games in the evening."

"Maybe this wouldn't sound at all surprising to an outsider, but it took our hearts away. We had known such things to happen, mind you, by accident, to some lucky devil who adventured into a stuffy church, looked good to some philanthropic pillar thereof, and was invited out to dinner. But this wasn't a splash in the ocean of a big camp."

"Here to our astonishment we found that such entertainment was freely and eagerly waiting for every man in camp. We learned of dancing parties almost every night in the week. We learned of citizens who own houses on Any-Camp-Town river. That's something I used to enjoy at home—and have never come near to before in the army."

Before War Camp Community Service went into the camp towns there were from time to time spasmodic and unorganized attempts on the part of civilians allied with local organizations to entertain enlisted men. But uncoordinated the best intended expressions of popular welcome often lost themselves in a maze of conflicting ends. Community effort had to be organized to be effective.

The task was national. It was quasi-governmental. It called for military and naval direction of the nation's mobilized hospitality resources, not adjacent to one concentration camp or to a dome, but extended to the furthest foot of American soil where soldiers and sailors were likely to seek relaxation and service.

For this task War Camp Community Service was established. War Camp Community Service is as broad as the community. It coordinates the war camp town's social, religious and political life and by so doing compounds the service of each to the enlisted man. It knows neither race nor creed.

### Work of Girls' Division.

Under the girls' division of War Camp Community Service the girlhood of America's camp towns is being organized for patriotic and community service. This division bands together girls in a common endeavor to raise their mutual standards of personal efficiency in contributing to the promotion of the war.

They help heap the mercy kits of the Red Cross to capacity. They make baby kits for French and Belgian mothers. They collect tin foil, old clothes and other waste materials and turn them into patriotic channels. They sell War Savings Stamps and Liberty Loan bonds. They host com-

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## The Why of the War Camp Community Service.

FROM the Great Lakes to the Gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, wherever wearers of the uniform are gathered, War Camp Community Service serves.

The spirit with which our soldiers leave America and their efficiency on the battle fronts of Europe will be vitally affected by the character of the environment surrounding our military camps.

WOODROW WILSON.

To me, War Camp Community Service is the most amazing and convincing argument thus far disclosed that the nation is behind her sons in this war.

LIEUT. DEMPSTER O. MURPHY.

Army morale is closely knit with army morale—contented and happy men make good soldiers.

It is possible to be lonely among a million people. One touch of real individual hospitality will frequently make a fighting man out of a homesick boy.

War Camp Community Service threads together the various phases of community life into a definite programme of hospitality to the soldier, the sailor and the marine.

Enter: War Camp Community Service. Exit: The aimless and lonely hour of the soldier on leave.

If War Camp Community Service did nothing else but act as an information bureau for soldiers and sailors and their civilian friends, it would be performing a worth while task. But this is only where its work begins.

War winning efficiency in the country's factories and shipyards demands sane and healthful recreation. War Camp Community Service supplies it.

War Camp Community Service has aided the wives of many soldiers and sailors to find employment in and near training stations, that they might be near their husbands.

War Camp Community Service meets travelling soldiers and sailors, their friends and relatives, provides rest rooms and solves their problems.

War Camp Community Service organizes American girls for patriotic service, and supervises their recreation.